

Message Text

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ACTION AF-10

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EO 11652: NA
TAGS: ELAB, GH
SUBJ: MAY DAY 1978

1. AS IN 1977, THERE WAS NO MASS OBSERVANCE OF MAY DAY IN GHANA THIS YEAR. THE ONLY PUBLIC EVENT WAS A RECEPTION HOSTED BY THE TRADE UNIONS CONGRESS AT WHICH SEVERAL LABOR STALWARTS RECEIVED AWARDS.

2. THE MAY DAY MESSAGE OF A.M. ISSIFU, THE SECRETARY GENERAL OF THE TUC, RECEIVED PROMINENT COVERAGE IN THE GHANAIAN PRESS. HE NOTED THAT EVENTS SINCE THE LAST MAY DAY HAD NOT GENERATED PATRIOTISM AND CONFIDENCE IN ORDINARY WORKERS. ISSIFU CITED THE PURSUIT OF PRIVATE WEALTH, THE RAPE OF THE ECONOMY BY "A NEW BREED OF PROFITEERS AND BLACKMARKETEERS" AND THE NEGLECT OF HUMAN SUFFERING.

3. ISSIFU OBSERVED THAT UNWARRANTED REBELLION WAS NOT IN THE INTEREST OF GHANAIAN WORKERS, HOWEVER, AND ASKED THEM TO REJECT CLANDESTINE INDUSTRIAL ACTION. HE ASSERTED THAT THE LABOR MOVEMENT IS DISCIPLINED, RESPONSIBLE AND UNCOMPROMISING ON BASIC TRADE UNION PRINCIPLES. THE SECRETARY GENERAL SAID THE TUC WILL INTENSIFY ITS CALL ON THE GOVERNMENT TO CRITICALLY EXAMINE ECONOMIC POLICIES, CITING SHORTAGES, HIGH PRICES,
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UNEMPLOYMENT AND THE NEAR HALT OF PUBLIC TRANSPORT.

4. THE TUC HEAD OBSERVED THAT "SALVATION" IN THE PRESENT SITUATION WOULD NOT COME FROM THE EAST OR WEST, BUT FROM GHANAISANS THEMSELVES. CONCERNING THE RESULTS OF THE MARCH 30 REFERENDUM, HE CALLED ON GHANAISANS TO RESPECT THE OUTCOME AND CONTRIBUTE TO UNION GOVERNMENT. HE RE-

STATED THE TUC'S POSITION THAT UNION GOVERNMENT SHOULD
LEAD TO THE CREATION OF A SOCIALIST STATE IN GHANA.
IN CONCLUSION, HE NOTED THAT THE TUC IS IN
NO MOOD TO COMPROMISE ON COLLECTIVE BARGAINING AND
THAT IT WILL CONTINUE TO PRESS FOR NEGOTIATED CONTRACTS.

5. COMMENT. THE SECRETARY GENERAL'S MESSAGE PAINTS A
BLEAK PICTURE OF THE WORKERS' SITUATION IN GHANA, BUT
HE AVOIDED ANY DIRECT CRITICISM OF THE SUPREME MILITARY
COUNCIL GOVERNMENT. THE SMC HAS BEEN GENERALLY PRO-
LABOR AND THE TUC LEADERSHIP MISTRUSTS THE PROFESSIONALS
AND INTELLECTUALS WHO HAVE LED THE OPPOSITION TO THE
MILITARY GOVERNMENT AND ITS PROPOSAL FOR UNION GOVERNMENT.
ISSIFU'S STATEMENT THAT THE TUC WILL NOT COMPROMISE ON
COLLECTIVE BARGAINING IS LABOR'S REPLY TO THE CALL BY
THE MANUFACTURERS' ASSOCIATION AND THE EMPLOYERS GROUP
FOR A MORATORIUM ON WAGE INCREASES. WE ARE AIR-
POUCHING A COMPLETE TEXT OF THE SECRETARY GENERAL'S
MAY DAY MESSAGE. SMITH

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